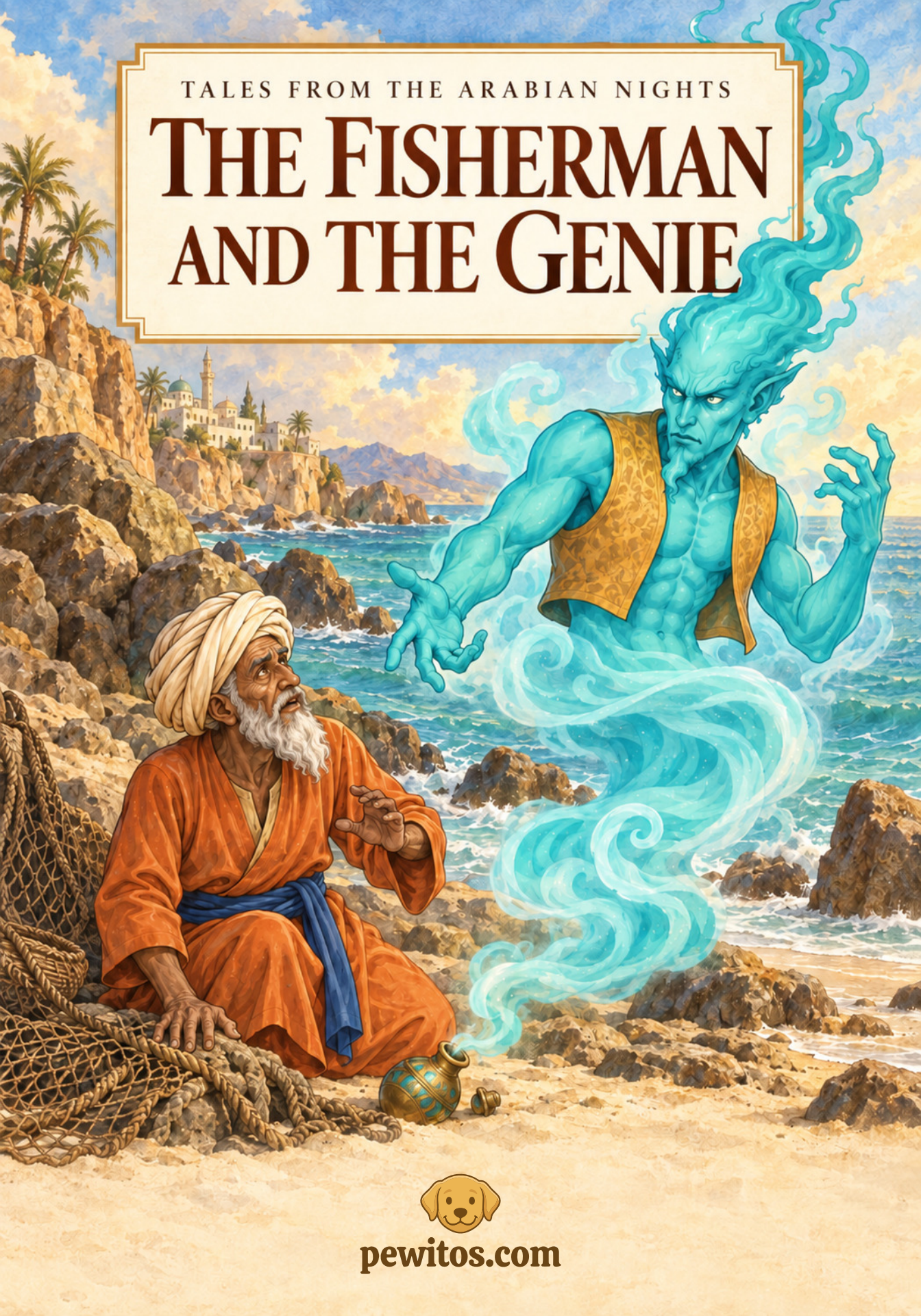


TALES FROM THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

THE FISHERMAN AND THE GENIE



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The Fisherman and the Genie



An illustrated edition by Pewitos

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Before dawn, Idris mended his net beside the door. He had fished all his life, but lately he had returned with an empty basket. He ran his fingers over a hole: losing a fish through it would mean losing supper.





His daughter wrapped a piece of bread for the journey. “If you bring two fish, I’ll save one for tomorrow,” she said. Idris tied the last thread. “First we have to find them.” He shouldered the net and set off for the beach.

He no longer had the strength to cast endlessly. Each morning he made four attempts and returned before the heat. The first brought up a piece of driftwood. Idris set it aside, cleared the ropes, and watched the current.

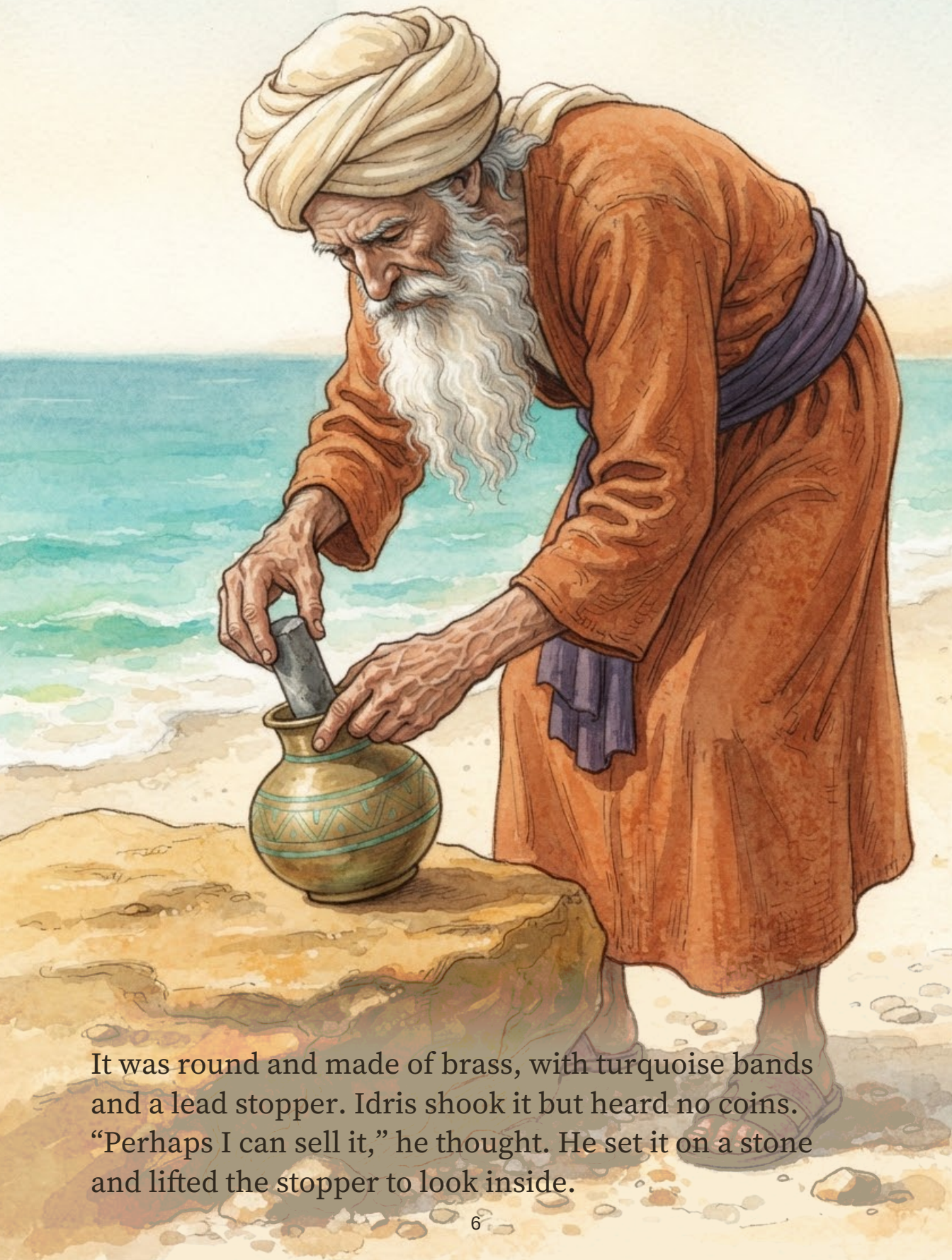


The second cast brought seaweed; the third, mud and broken shells. He rested on a rock. The bread was still wrapped: he would rather share it at home. He had one cast left. He searched for a pool among the stones.



On the fourth cast, the net sank suddenly. Idris braced his feet and pulled with both hands. Something heavy scraped the bottom. “Easy. Don’t tear,” he murmured to the ropes. At last, a small vessel rolled onto the wet sand.





It was round and made of brass, with turquoise bands and a lead stopper. Idris shook it but heard no coins. "Perhaps I can sell it," he thought. He set it on a stone and lifted the stopper to look inside.

A thread of smoke escaped from the neck. Idris stepped back. It grew until it hid the cliffs, forming a face, arms, and a golden vest. An enormous genie floated above the beach. The vessel still lay at the fisherman's feet.





“Free!” roared Marid. Then he looked at Idris. “I spent centuries imprisoned. I swore to punish whoever released me.” The fisherman gripped the stopper. He had hoped to find food; now he did not even know whether he could get home.

Idris looked at the sea: he could not swim away. He looked at the genie: he could not overpower him either. Then his eyes fell on the vessel. It was barely large enough for his hand. He breathed slowly and raised his head.



“Before you punish me, explain something,” he said. “You were inside this?” Marid folded his arms. “All of me!” Idris tilted the vessel. “I won’t believe it until I see it.” The genie drew himself up, his pride wounded. “Then watch closely.”



Marid dissolved into turquoise swirls. His arms vanished first, then his vest and face. Idris watched the neck of the vessel. As the final wisp slipped inside, he pressed the stopper firmly into place with both hands.



“Let me out!” Marid shouted from inside. Idris sat down to catch his breath. “You threatened me after I helped you. Why should I open it?” This time the voice was small, not thunderous. “Because I don’t want to return to the seabed.”



“If I open it, will you keep your word?” Idris asked. “Yes. I will not hurt you, and I will show you where to find fish.” The fisherman listened carefully. Then he removed the stopper and stepped aside. This time Marid emerged quietly: he had a promise to keep.



Marid neither raised his arms nor roared. “This way,” he said, pointing between the cliffs. Idris collected his net and basket. He followed, watching each step. A promise still had to become an action.



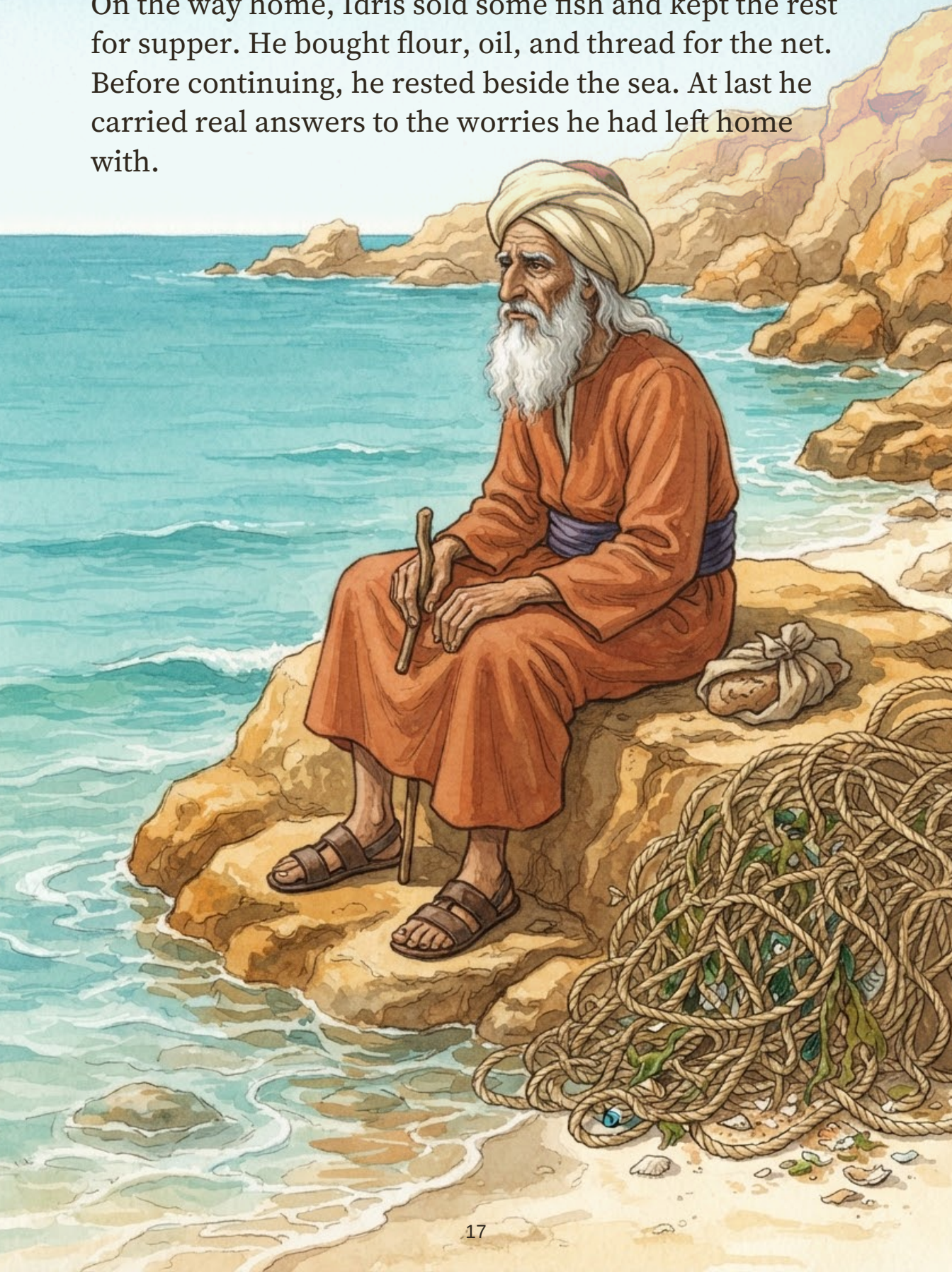
Beyond the last hill lay a clear pond. White, red, blue, and yellow fish swam below. Idris knelt beside the water. “Take only what you need,” said Marid. The fisherman spread his net; at last, something living stirred in its cords.

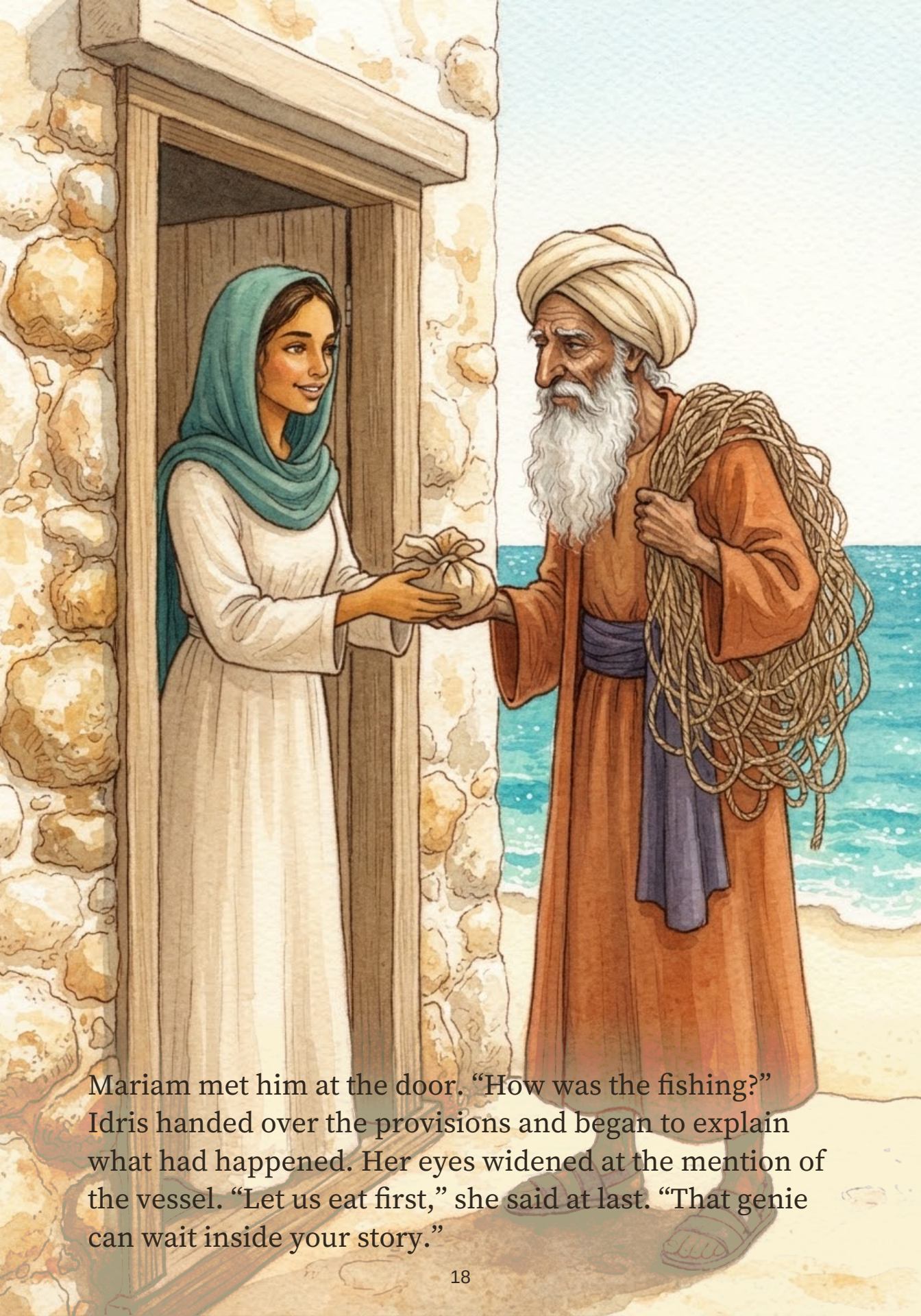


He caught four fish, one of each color, and left the others in the pond. “Now I have something for the market,” he said. When he looked back, Marid was drifting over the hills like a cloud. Idris quietly settled his basket.



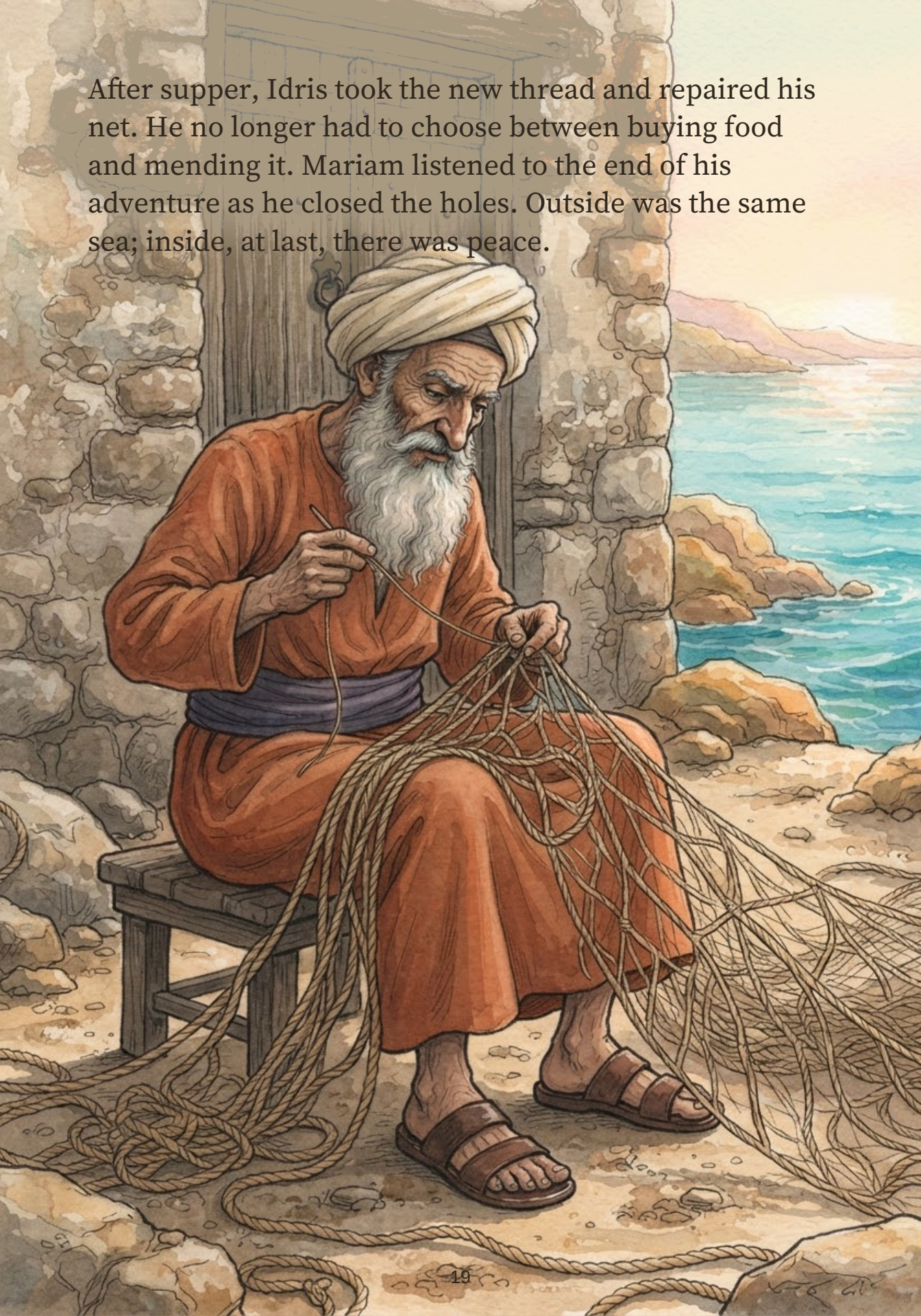
On the way home, Idris sold some fish and kept the rest for supper. He bought flour, oil, and thread for the net. Before continuing, he rested beside the sea. At last he carried real answers to the worries he had left home with.





Mariam met him at the door. “How was the fishing?” Idris handed over the provisions and began to explain what had happened. Her eyes widened at the mention of the vessel. “Let us eat first,” she said at last. “That genie can wait inside your story.”

After supper, Idris took the new thread and repaired his net. He no longer had to choose between buying food and mending it. Mariam listened to the end of his adventure as he closed the holes. Outside was the same sea; inside, at last, there was peace.



The next morning he returned to the coast with his net ready. The sea promised no good catch, but Idris had provisions and could work calmly. He watched the waves before standing up. The adventure was over; now he would take care of what he had gained.



About this edition

The Fisherman and the Genie

A traditional tale from The Thousand and One Nights, a collection shaped over centuries with no single known author. A fisherman finds a jar and must answer its inhabitant with wit. This is a Pewitos adaptation.



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Idris sets out to find supper and discovers an angry genie. His quick thinking opens an unexpected path: from a difficult promise to shared bread and a mended net.



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